

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Stock Growers discuss predator management**

Overview: "Predator Management for the Future of Wyoming" Presentation Made to Game/Wildlife Committee at 2005 Wyoming Stock Growers' Summer Convention and Trade Show.

On Thursday, June 9, the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA) convened at the Holiday Inn in Cheyenne. Various groups including the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board and Wyoming Wool Growers Association presented information to the Game and Wildlife Committee – as well as a large audience of WSGA members – on the topic of predator management. Presentations to the committee included such issues as wolf litigation, the Wildlife & Natural Resource Funding Act and possible policy changes.

A much discussed topic was the proposed request to the 2006 Wyoming Legislature for an additional 10 million dollars to be allocated biannually to local predatory animal boards through the Wyoming Department of Agriculture (WDA).

"This is the first time in Wyoming's history that the county predator animal boards have the opportunity to obtain real, substantial funding," Animal Damage Management Board (ADMB) administrator, Hank Uhden, said.

Under the proposal currently being discussed, the funds would be appropriated to the ADMB and then distributed out to the county predatory animal boards in order to help them achieve their statutory responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

- 1) exercising general supervision over the control of predatory animals that prey upon and destroy livestock, other domestic animals and wild game;
- 2) to devise and put in operation those methods that best control predatory animals;
- 3) administer funds received from predatory animal control fees and from other sources to carry out the predatory animal control program.

Those involved – including WDA Director John Etchepare, WDA Deputy Director Jim Schwartz and Hank Uhden – fielded questions from the audience about the proposal, and also announced that the Department, in cooperation with the State Predatory Animal Board and various agriculture groups, would spend time this summer traveling throughout the state to discuss the merits of the proposed legislation with each county predatory animal board. The Joint Agriculture Committee, who initially requested the bill, asked that the language be developed and brought before them at their next meeting, currently scheduled for October.

Bryce Reece, executive vice president of the Wyoming Wool Growers Association, presented the first draft of specific proposed changes to the Predatory Animal Board Statutes, which will be presented and discussed in detail with the county boards during the meetings to be held this summer. Included in these proposed changes was the suggestion to change the name of the county predatory animal boards and districts to "wildlife damage management boards" and "wildlife damage management districts." In addition, it was suggested that the number of predatory animal board members increase from six to nine if a district were to receive state funds. The additional three members of the board would come from sportsmen/hunters within the local community that the boards represent.

A complete summary of all draft proposed changes to predatory animal board statutes is below:

### **SUMMARY OF *DRAFT* PROPOSED CHANGES TO PREDATORY ANIMAL BOARD STATUTES**

1. Changes the name of the county predatory animal boards and districts to "wildlife damage management boards" and "wildlife damage management districts"
2. If a county board decides to accept state funds (assuming that such funds are appropriated by the legislature), then the composition of the board changes to a nine member board instead of a six member board. The additional three members of the board represent sportsmen and

hunters from the county. Appointment of sportsmen and hunter positions to the board shall be made by the Animal Damage Management Board, following solicitation of applicants. Applications for sportsmen and hunter representatives to the board shall be solicited through local media outlets within the county that is served by the county wildlife damage management board, as well as through normal public information activities of the Animal Damage Management Board.

3. If a county board chooses to NOT accept state funds, then nothing changes and they carry on business as usual.
4. Maintains the current make-up of the board with three sheepmen and three cattlemen except in the case where a qualified board member from one or the other species can not be found to run or be appointed in order to maintain the three to three ratio. In those cases, a board can be made up of four from one species and two from another, but can not exceed that 4-2 split in any circumstance.
5. Sets the maximum predator fee on livestock to \$1.00 for each class of livestock. Feedlot animals (both cattle and sheep) increase to \$0.25.
6. Removes the refund provision entirely.
7. Requires that a board, "To the greatest extent practical and possible, coordinate efforts with landowners, local sportsmen, game and fish department employees, the local public and the Animal Damage Management Board to develop a comprehensive predator management program for their respective wildlife damage management districts. These programs shall address livestock, wildlife, and public health concerns."
8. Clarifies that the predatory animal control fee to be charged for the coming year is set at the annual meeting based upon a recommendation of the majority of the producers who have paid predatory animal control fees in that district during the previous year present at the district's annual meeting.
9. Appropriates from the General Fund ten million dollars(\$10,000,000) which shall be distributed over the next two years to the various county wildlife damage management boards for the purposes of carrying out their statutory responsibilities as defined in WS 11-6-205. Funds shall be distributed under criteria developed jointly by the Animal Damage Management Board and the county wildlife damage management boards, and shall be established by rulemaking through the Animal Damage Management Board. County wildlife damage management boards shall be required to submit a budget and a plan of work to the Animal Damage Management Board on an annual basis.

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